

Cherry Mansion
Pittsburg Landing
Hardin County
Tennessee

HABS No. TENN-141

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PHOTOGRAPH

District of Tennessee

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

APPENDIX

HABS No. TENN-141

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CHERRY MANSION
Pittsburg Landing, Hardin County, Tennessee

Owner: United States Government

Date of erection: c. 1850

Present condition: Altered

Material of construction: Frame

Addendum to:

Cherry Mansion
101 Main Street
Savannah (Pittsburg Landing, as originally
recorded)
Hardin County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-141

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDENDUM TO:

CHERRY MANSION

HABS No. TN-141

Location: 101 Main Street, Savannah, Hardin County, Tennessee.

Latitude: 35° 13' 32" N

Longitude: 88° 15' 24" W

Present Owner: Mr. Bob Guinn, trustee (Geraldine Guinn Memorial Trust Fund)

Present Occupant: Guinn family.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: This attractive residence, situated high above the Tennessee River, was built in 1849 by David Robinson for his son-in-law, William H. Cherry. The house is famous for its use as a Federal Headquarters by Major Generals C. F. Smith, U. S. Grant, Don Carlos Buell and W. H. L. Wallace, during the Battle of Shiloh, a few miles to the southwest. The modified, white Georgian building faces west to the river with a handsome two-level porch. The site terraces down to the river.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1849.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following chain of title, somewhat defective, is the best that can be established from the surviving records of Hardin County. Deed Books A, B, E, and F are missing.

1825 Chancery Decree September 8, 1825, recorded in the Maury County book
Chancery Minute Book 1 page 51 (3000 acres)
Chancery Court
to
John Erwin

- 18__ Deed (recorded in a missing book) mentioned in
Book C page 67
John Erwin
to
Robert Purdy
- 1836 Deed December 24, 1835, recorded May 18, 1836 in
Book C page 67 (Quit claim for \$1.00)
James C. Moore and Martha M. Moore (wife), heirs of
Robert Purdy
to
William P. Purdy, heir of Robert Purdy
- 18__ Deed recorded in a missing book (between October,
1839 and August, 1842)
William P. Purdy
to
David Robinson
- 1849 Decree September, 1849, recorded September 30, 1851 in
Deed Book K page 43 (\$1800.00 value, including brick house)
Chancery Court
to
Alexander M. Hardin and wife (heirs of David Robinson)
- 1854 Deed June 5, 1854, recorded July 31, 1854 in
Book K page 32 (\$2305.00)
Robert Hardin, Margaret E. Peay, and Thomas Peay, heirs
of Alexander M. Hardin
to
W. H. Cherry
- 1869 Deed January 23, 1869, recorded January 23, 1869 in
Book O page 205 (\$6000.00)
W. H. Cherry
to
Edgar Cherry
- 1931 Will July 29, 1931, recorded December 8, 1931 in
Will Book 3 page 231
Mary D. Cherry (widow of Edgar)
to
Mary L. Winship (daughter)

- 1935 Deed June 1, 1935, recorded June 1, 1935 in
Book 12 page 280 (\$2300.00)
Mary L. Winship
to
Geraldine Guinn
- 1951 Will July 19, 1949, recorded March 17, 1951 in
Will Book 4 page 51
Della Blanchard (mother of Geraldine Guinn, who had
died intestate)
to
Bob Guinn (son-in-law)
- 1951 Deed April 6, 1951, recorded April 7, 1951 in
Book 32 page 356
Bob Guinn
to
Bob Guinn, trustee (Geraldine Guinn Memorial Trust Fund)

4. Alterations and additions: The house was considerably altered at least twice. At some time late in the nineteenth century, the original porticoes were replaced with Victorian woodwork. In 1935-6 an attempt was made by the present owner to restore these to their original appearance, as recalled by members of the Cherry family then living. At the same time extensive remodeling was done, with Hubert T. McGee, a Memphis architect, furnishing the plans. The weatherboarded portion of the east wall was rebuilt in brick; a new kitchen and bath were added; the north front was played down and the west (river) front emphasized.

B. Historical Context: The first owner of the Cherry Mansion was David Robinson, an early settler of Hardin County who had extensive land holdings on both sides of the Tennessee River. This was not his first home, as has been inferred by various writers who date the house too early on the assumption that Robinson built it soon after his arrival in the area. Robinson first lived in the vicinity of the present hospital, on the eastern outskirts of Savannah; this property was conveyed by his heir William H. H. Seaman to Archibald McDougal in 1855. Tradition in the McDougal family is that Robinson had arranged to sell the former residence when his new brick house on the river was completed, but that he had barely moved into the new home when he died suddenly (1849) and the transfer was delayed for nearly six years. The fragmentary county records indicate that the mansion had not been built in 1836; that it was there in 1849; and that Robinson bought the land in 1839-42, or else failed to record the deed at all.

The Cherry Mansion is important primarily as the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant from March 13 until April 29, 1862. By this time it had been for eight years the property of William H. Cherry, whose family owned it through 1935. There is a letter, first published in the Confederate Veteran magazine, in which Mrs. W. H. Cherry recounts the story of Grant and his staff having sat down for breakfast when the sound of a distant cannon announced the beginning of the Battle of Shiloh (April 6, 1862); the breakfast was left untouched. Two Union generals, W. H. L. Wallace and C. F. Smith, died at the mansion from wounds received at Shiloh.

William H. Cherry was born in Hardin County in 1822. His fortune was made initially as a merchant and planter in Savannah. After the Civil War he became president of the Merchants National Bank in Memphis. In 1871 he moved to Nashville (where his Victorian mansion was a downtown showplace), and he died there in 1885.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This handsome residence dates from the ante-bellum period, and its principal features include the porches, front and rear entrances, parlors and main stairway.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is in an excellent state of repair and is well maintained.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 40' from east to west and 50' from north to south, both dimensions exclusive of the porches on the east, west and north sides. The structure stands about 20' to the cornice and about 31' to the top of its hip roof. There are five bays across the east and west sides. It is two full stories high and has a rectangular shape.
2. Foundations: The foundations are of brick and stone. In the exposed portions of the basement the walls are of stone; in the crawl space under the remainder of the house the inside surface of the foundation walls is of brick while there is a stone exterior facing. About 2' of stone base is exposed on the exterior; it is painted white.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are of brick and are laid in common bond with header courses at irregular intervals (either 4,5,6 spaces between headers). The brick was made on the site; the walls are painted white.

A portion of the east wall of the house contains replacement brick which is smaller (8" x 4" x 2") than the rougher, original brick (8 1/4" x 4 1/4" x 2 1/4"). This portion had been sheathed with weatherboarding, which was removed during the 1935-36 restoration. (The newer brick was not made on the site).

4. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing walls. The east wall varies in thickness from 23" to 12". The north wall is 20" thick; the west wall is 14" and 17" thick. There are 2" x 8" floor joists for the first level floor system. Other joists are not exposed. The roof is framed with 2" x 8" and 2" x 5" boards with 5" and 8" board sheathing.
5. Porches, stoops: There are porches on the east, west and north sides of the house. That on the west (river view) is the most prominent. It is the "front" porch and is two stories high. It measures 10' x 30'-6" and has four square tapered columns two stories high. They measure 18" at base and 14-1/2" at top. The roof has a flat surface and serves as a deck with a railing enclosure. There are five risers from the grade to the first floor which is 2'-10" above grade.

The porch on the east (entrance side) is one story and measures 9' x 27'. It has four 13-1/4" square columns. The first floor is 3'-1" above grade and there are six risers on the east and four on the north side which are of brick. The flat porch roof has a railing around it.

The north porch is also one story high. It measures 9' x 20' and has four 12" columns. There are five risers from grade to the deck. The roof is flat and has a railing. A 1933 photograph reveals a north porch two stories in height instead of the present one story structure.

On the south side there is a small concrete stoop up five risers from grade. There is a bracketed canopy over the door.

6. Chimneys: There are four chimneys on the house. All are of brick and are painted white. With the exception of the chimney at the southeast corner of the house, all are projected from the exterior wall. There is one chimney on the east side near the north end, another on the west side near the north end, and another on the south side near the west end. The chimney which projects through the roof near the southeast corner is 1'-9" x 3'-3 1/4" and is 7'-8" at its tallest. The chimney on the east facade is 1'-9 1/2" x 3'-4 1/2" and stands 12'-1" from edge of roof. That on the west side is 1'-10 1/2" x 3'-4" and stands 9'-0" from edge of roof. The chimney on the south side straddles a gable roofed wing. It measures 3'-2 3/4" x 3'-7" and stands 3'-4 1/4" above the ridge.

All chimneys are essentially plain and have the top two courses projecting slightly. The three chimneys projecting from the walls are stepped out just below the cornice line, and are 5'-1" to 5'-9" wide at the base.

7. Openings:

- a. Doors: The matching entrance doors (east and west facades) are 2'-10 7/8" x 6'-11 3/4" x 1 3/4" with six panels. They are flanked by sidelights and topped with a transom in a low profile having nine-pane fanlights. The transom is fixed. This entire composition measures 6'-2 1/2" wide x 8'-10 1/4" long. There are two doors on the north facade opening onto the north porch. They are 3'-1 1/2" x 7'-9" x 1 3/4" with six panels. On the first floor south is a 2'-6" x 6'-5" x 1 3/4" door with glass lights over two wood panels. On the second floor there are doors on the east and west sides which open onto the roof decks. That on the east is 2'-8" x 6'-8"; the west is 2'-8" x 6'-7". They have glass lights (3"x3") over three horizontal panels. On the north facade there are two doors opening onto the roof deck. They measure 3'-0" x 7'-4 1/4" x 1 3/4" (six-panel). On the west facade there is a door in the roof dormer. It provides access to the top of the west porch.
- b. Windows and shutters: All window openings have non-operable shutters which are painted green. Windows are double hung with 9/9 lights on the first floor. These windows measure 2'-10" x 6'-7". Second floor windows have 9/6 lights and measure 2'-10" x 5'-8 3/4". On the south side there is a small window having double hung sash and 6/6 lights. It measures 2'-3" x 4'-2".

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is hipped with a double slope. The lower slope is about 33° and is covered with grey asbestos tiles which are flat. The upper slope is about 12 1/2° and is covered with green painted raised seam sheet metal. The upper portion is surrounded by a railed compound and measures 29'-0" x 20'-9". The porches are covered with built-up roofing painted green.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The box cornice is partially hidden behind the 4" gutter which is attached to it. With the gutter the cornice projects about 1'-1" from the face of the building.

- c. Dormers: There is a widow's walk atop the roof. The rectangular compound measures 29'-0" x 20'-9". There is a single dormer on the east side and one on the west side. That on the west contains a door to the roof of the west porch; that on the east has a window. The dormers have arched roofs covered with green painted sheet metal. The 1933 photograph of the east facade reveals that the roof was different than it is today, and that the dormers and the widow's walk did not exist.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first and second floor plans are similar in layout with a few differences. There is a central hall through the house from east to west. Entrance is made on the east side. To either side of the hall are two rooms. The central hall contains a stairway along the north wall. On the first floor the two rooms along the north side are parlors. Access is made from each room to the north porch. On the south side is a kitchen (southeast corner) and a dining room (southwest corner). Between the kitchen and dining room is a narrow hall perpendicular to the central hall and connecting it to the south exterior door. On the second floor there are four chambers. Between those on the south side a bathroom has been added and the original attic stairway was moved eastward. The chamber in the southeast corner of the house lost about 3' because of this change.
2. Stairways: The open-string to the second floor is located along the north wall of the central hall. Ascent is made from the west to the east in a single straight run. There are nineteen risers of 6 3/4" (11 3/4" treads; 2" nosing). They are 3'-3 1/4" wide. The stairway is enclosed below; originally this space was a closet but has been converted to a 1/2 bath. The molded handrail, newel and turned balusters are of walnut. The railing runs up from the first floor newel and wraps around the stair opening in a continuous line.

The attic stairs are perpendicular to the central hall on the southeast side. There are sixteen risers in a single run with 8 1/4" risers and 10" treads. They are 2'-9 3/4" wide. The stairway is completely enclosed. It is not original, and had been moved about three feet further west, when the second floor alterations were made.

3. Flooring: The original pine floor is still in place in the side rooms. It is 2" thick and varies in width 4" to 9". On the second floor the chamber floors are almost 2" higher than the hall floor. The hall floors are 3" boards. The kitchen floor is linoleum; the bathroom is tiled.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls vary a great deal in thickness. On the first floor the north wall of the central hall is 19 1/4" while the west end of the hall's south wall is 15" and the east end of that wall is 7" thick. The wall between the two parlors on the north side is 15 1/4". The wall between the dining room and the minor hall is 15"; that between the kitchen and minor hall is 7". The corresponding walls upstairs are similar except that the north wall of the hall is 15" thick. The thicker walls are masonry; the others are frame. Walls are finished with wood lath and plaster. The kitchen has a plain board dado; in the hall there is a wood wainscot (white) on the stairway wall. The bathroom has ceramic tile on the lower part and plaster above. Most walls are wallpapered. Ceiling height on the first floor is 10'-3"; second floor is 9'-1 1/2".
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The interior doors are all about 3'x 6'-6" x 1 3/4" (actual dimensions vary as much as 3/4" off the overall dimensions). They are six-paneled. The double doors between the north parlors on the first floor are 2'-6" x 6'-6" x 1 3/4" each. The jambs of the thicker walls are paneled. There is a 5 1/2" surround with molded edge.
6. Decorative features and trim: The central stairway is a notable feature of the interior. (See also description of stairway on page 7). Each mantelpiece of the house is slightly different but all are of wood. The vertical elements are the same, resembling pilasters, but the entablature-like heads are different for each. On the first floor the fireplaces have marble hearths and marble inner facing; the firebox is brick. On the second floor brick is used instead of marble.
7. Hardware: Standard hardware is employed. There are 3 1/2" butt hinges having one of the wings exposed on the interior door surface.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Steam or hot water radiators are used.
 - b. Lighting: Electric service has been built in and concealed.
 - c. Plumbing: Plumbing service has been added since the 1930s.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The mansion sits high on a bluff overlooking the Tennessee River. Its site is at the west end of the town of Savannah and on the south side of Main Street; east side of the Tennessee River. The house is about 500' from Highway 64 to the south and is visible from the river bridge. The site drops in terraces to a road above the riser level. There are four terraces with stone steps connecting the levels. The stairs are 44" wide with 7" risers and 10 1/2" treads, and have stone newels and pipe rails. There are four banks of stairs with eleven and seventeen risers. At the bottom of the terraces there is a stone retaining wall about 7' high and 21" thick with a stairway through the arched opening (the fourth of the stair banks). The wall rises above the arched opening. There is a wrought-iron gate with vertical rods.
2. Landscape plan: There is a large grassed area to the east of the house. It is enclosed on the Main Street side with a stone and iron fence. The terraces on the west side have already been mentioned. The entire site has several large trees.
3. Outbuildings: A carriage house is located about 200 yards southeast of the house. It is of wood frame construction. To the southwest of the house is an overlook constructed of stone. It is set atop a vaulted chamber built into the slope with its floor at the first terrace level below house grade. (For a view of the overlook, see Cherry Mansion, Overlook, HABS No. TN-141-A).

A wood kitchen structure was originally located to the south of the house. It is no longer standing.

The original wells are still present but covered. There is one at the east side and one on the south. One had a depth of about 105'.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: There are at least two photographs of the Cherry Mansion taken in the twentieth century but before the 1935-36 remodeling, on file at Shiloh National Military Park. There is also a blueprint for the renovation by the architect H. T. McGee, on file there with the extensive correspondence pertaining to the proposed National Park Service acquisition of the Cherry home in the early 1930s.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Hardin County Deed Books, Hardin County Registrar's Office,
Savannah, Tennessee.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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Publisher and date not indicated.

Brazelton, B.G. History of Hardin County, Tennessee., Official
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July 1972

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July 1972

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Spring 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), Project Supervisor, and Richard H. Hulan, Project Historian (Nashville) with architects James D. Skelton (University of Illinois) and

Mark P. Frederickson (University of Arizona) and student architects Darrell K. Pattison (University of Cincinnati) and John P. Vergos (University of Tennessee), at the Memphis, Tennessee field office on the campus of Memphis State University.

Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington D.C. office, edited the data in the Spring of 1985 for transmittal to the Library of Congress.

The photographs of the mansion were taken in the Spring of 1974 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer.